

RESOLUTION NO. 12-663

WHEREAS, the City Council and the Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, are apprised that The Gray Sisters Singers will be celebrating their 35th Anniversary at the Saint Bartley Primitive Baptist Church at 7:00 p.m. on August 13, 2012; and,

WHEREAS, the Gray Sisters of Decatur, Alabama, are all born again believers for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are sisters in the flesh and anointed in the Spirit: Shirley Gray Green (Spiritual Advisor/Booking Agent) is the lead and bass singer; Elizabeth Gray Raybon (President) sings high soprano; Mary Gray (Treasurer/Booking Agent) sings alto; and Naomi Gray Pruitt (Secretary) is second soprano. They sing mostly gospel music and a few contemporary songs. Their motto is, "If the phone rings, we will surely sing." The Gray Sisters Singers state, "We haven't gotten tired yet." Each time they perform, they expect God to intervene, for they know that God is in full control. It is the Gray Sisters' prayer that lives will be changed, souls saved and revived each time they stand. Their parents are Reverend and Mrs. Elijah Gray, Jr., of Decatur, Alabama; and,

WHEREAS, the Gray Sisters have sung in many churches, convalescent homes, banquets and parks. The Lord has allowed them to release four recordings, their latest "Jesus Is a Rock" was released in April 2007. It is their ministry to carry the praises of the Lord throughout the world. They have given CD's to every convalescent home and jail in the states of Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi; and,

WHEREAS, the Gray Sisters of Decatur started singing together after a drunk driver killed their little sister. After singing together for 35 years, the sisters have perfected their harmony both onstage and off. They believe their rehearsals and performances have kept them close. Three of them were children when their 4-year old sister Martha died in 1974, after being struck by a car. They have many memories of her. Mary recalled the coffee table songs when they would stand on their parents' coffee table and sing. Martha used to sing a song entitled, "I'm Holding On and I Won't Let Go of My Faith." This was Martha's favorite song and it left a big impact on the older sisters. Martha would have been age 34 on August 2, which is also Mary's birthday. The Gray Sisters remembered her at their Love Banquet entitled "Lord, We Want to Go Higher;" and,

WHEREAS, Shirley began singing in a group with their five brothers and other relatives as The Followers of Jesus. They sang together for about 20 years, and after Martha's death the other sisters asked why they couldn't sing, too, so the sisters organized their own group. The Followers of Jesus slowed their performance after several brothers were called to the ministry. The Gray Sisters Singers "really took off," Shirley said. Through the years, they've had invitations to sing all over the Shoals and Tennessee Valley area, as well as Tupelo, Corinth, Nashville, Chicago, Cincinnati, Kentucky and Georgia; and,

WHEREAS, on road trips, they take a variety of matching outfits and shoes in a rainbow of colors. "Of course, we don't all fit in all the ones we've had through the years," said Shirley. They often get their shoes mixed up and recall plenty of other light moments. Once they were singing and while going down the aisle Mary's hairpiece fell off. She didn't realize it, and the others just watched and wondered who should pick it up. The Sisters feel it is great to be able to laugh in the flesh while singing in the Spirit and

help others make it through the day with a song. Elizabeth recalled a time when they were all too tired to drive, so they pulled into a Burger King parking lot for a nap. When they awoke, they were late for their next performance. Another time Elizabeth remembered a bumblebee landed on the pastor while they were singing, and Shirley started swatting at the bee. Finally the pastor, who didn't see the bee, told Samuel Green, "Your wife is hitting me;" and,

WHEREAS, the Gray Sisters Singers are members of Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church in Hillsboro, where Shirley Green is Pastor and Elizabeth is the Associate Minister. Mary and Shirley are working on degrees at Calhoun Community College and Naomi is a dental assistant. Their parents gave all but Shirley biblical names. The sisters are happy their parents and 96-year-old grandmother, Lillie Mae Wiggins, of Decatur, Alabama, can see them still sharing their talents as they have encouraged them to do since childhood. Their first performance was held at the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Florence, Alabama, where their father was Pastor in August of 1974. They recorded their first CD, "What Love Does the Father Have for Me," in 1999, and donated them to convalescent homes and jails. They have two additional CDs, "Send It On Down" and "He's So Real," and are working on a fourth. They won an award for their a cappella singing in Huntsville, Alabama; and,

WHEREAS, the Gray Sisters songs of Zion are a blessing and have kept them close, each one can tell when the others are getting weak and know how to lift each other up. The Gray Sisters are working to pass their closeness along to the next generations. With the help of a friend, Shavoria Mason, they divided their offspring by age into two singing groups, "The Melodic Voices" and "God's Little Heavenly Voices;" and,

WHEREAS, the Gray Sisters are thanking God in advance for The Open Door. They are standing on Revelation 3:8, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, acknowledge and congratulate The Gray Sister Singers on the occasion of their 35th Anniversary Celebration, and extend best wishes to them as they continue to sing God's praises.

ADOPTED on this the 9th day of August, 2012.

President of the City Council of the
City of Huntsville, Alabama

APPROVED on this the 9th day of August, 2012.

Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama